

University of Toronto
Faculty of Music

THURSDAY AFTERNOON SERIES

The Eight Flute Sonatas
by
Johann Sebastian Bach

MARIO DUSCHENES, Flute
KELSEY JONES, Harpsichord

Thursday, January 13th, 1966

at 2:00 p.m.

Concert Hall, Edward Johnson Building

PROGRAMME II

During the period of his appointment as court composer in Cöthen (1717-1723), Bach wrote a great deal of chamber music for keyboard and various ensembles. With the exception of a work for unaccompanied flute, the flute sonatas were conceived for solo instrument and harpsichord. Of the four authentic sonatas in this category, two are labelled "flute and continuo" and two "flute and cembalo". In the former, the keyboard player must realize a figured bass; in the latter, the harpsichord part is completely written out and the instrument assumes an obbligato role. The independent right-hand part is often paired with the flute, thus giving the effect of condensed trio-sonata texture.

The flute sonatas manifest a variety of styles ranging from the typically baroque concerto grosso with its broad themes and motor rhythms to the more delicate grace of the rococo minuet. Brilliant counterpoint, dynamic concertato, mebdic lyricism present a wide gamut of affections that palpably illustrate the baroque doctrine of figures: one mood, presented in the inherent nature of a theme and its characteristic development, dominates the structure of each successive movement.

Sonata in C major

Andante

Presto

Allegro

Adagio

Menuetto I, II

The authenticity of the C major sonata for flute and continuo (BWV 1033) has not been established. This work is actually in three movements. The first movement comprises three tempo indications: an andante, followed by a short presto section fuction as introduction to an allegro movement. The A minor tonality of the adagio is echoed by the second minuet, which is enclosed by the first minuet in a da capo form. The amalgamation of dance types belonging to the suite and free movements of the church sonata warns against too peremptory a standardization of baroque forms.

Sonata in B minor

Andante

Largo e dolce

Presto

Allegro

In this three-movement sonata written for flute and obbligato harpsichord (BWV 1030), two slow movements precede a two-part concluding movement. While the melodies of the extended andante are very florid in style, those of the largo exhibit a song-like,

lyrical quality as the solo flute is seconded by chordal accompaniment on the keyboard instrument. Finally, a three-part fugato, with the flute functioning as one line and the keyboard as the other two, leads into a brilliant allegro section in 12/16.

Sonata in A minor (for flute solo)

Allemande

Corrente

Sarabande

Bourrée anglaise

The A minor sonata (BWV 1013) should actually be called partita, a term which Bach used for his keyboard and violin suites. This work for solo flute represents an excellent companion piece for the solo violin and violoncello works in which Bach creates a musical world of complex polyphony through suggestive manipulation of an essentially monophonic instrument - a phenomenon that is staggering both in its imaginative conception and artistic consummation. The partita follows the usual formula: an allemande in moderate duple rhythm, an Italian corrente in quick 3/4 tempo, a sarabande in slower triple rhythm, and finally a bourrée in duple rhythm. While the solo violoncello works, called suites, begin with a prelude and end with a gigue, the violin and flute pieces, called partitas, (usually) begin with an allemande and conclude with a bourrée.

Sonata in E flat major

Allegro moderato

Siciliano

Allegro

The sonata in E flat major for flute and cembalo (BWV 1031) is another of the dubious works attributed to Bach. Like the G minor sonata, this composition follows the tripartite scheme of the Italian sonfonia, except that the middle movement is a dance type.